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ESTABLISHED 1936



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v.17:no.2
1953/1954

Augustana

No. 2

TORONTO, ONT.

WINTER- 1953-54



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"I think you have a good bunch of writers in C.P.M. The magazine is developing a character of its own."

B. K. Sandwell

"I am impressed by the quality of poetry and production of C.P.M.

Howard Sergeant, English poet and critic, Editor of "Outposts"

We note with pleasure that valiant little periodical maintains its standard of general excellence. Mr. Bourinot will be thanked by very many others for his frank and fearless utterance of something that badly needed to be said."

W. J. Hurlow in The Ottawa Citizen

"The sad fact that our Canadian Poetry Magazine keeps alive only by the skin of its teeth makes me wish that every man in this room would get acquainted with that quarterly and help the world to understand that there are new voices in this new country that are worth listening to."

—From an address by the late Arthur Stringer

"CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE, Autumn, 1952, has arrived in the first number of its 16th year. Under an able line of editors and with the generous assistance of many friends, Canadian Poetry Magazine kept going and has held its reputation as one of the best verse magazines in the English language. Mr. Bourinot has known how to retain the seniors, while encouraging juniors. We wish him and the quarterly many more productive years."

W. A. Deacon in Globe & Mail

"I think the current issue of C.P.M. is the best I have seen,"

Louis Blake Duff

CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE

677 DUNDAS STREET WEST (\$2.00 a year
TORONTO, ONTARIO 50 cents a copy)

ENCLOSED FIND THE
SUM OF

Subscription to Canadian Poetry Magazine for year.

Commencing

NAME

ADDRESS

CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 17

No. 2 — Winter 1953-54

Published by

THE CANADIAN AUTHORS ASSOCIATION

PERIODICAL

PR

CANADIAN POETRY

DATE: *Winter '51*

McLaughlin

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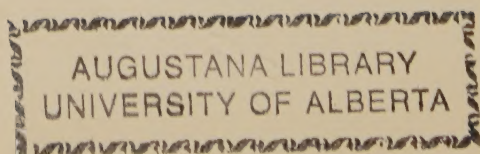
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Contributions are needed and would be very welcome.

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The contents of this Quarterly are indexed in The Canadian Index, published by
The Canadian Library Association.

CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE



Winter 1953-54

VOLUME 17 . . . NUMBER 2
TORONTO, ONT.

EDITOR . . . ARTHUR S. BOURINOT, F.R.S.L

P.O. Box 803, Postal Station B, Ottawa, Ontario

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.

"To write not to be understood is no less vaine than to speak
not to be heard. Fooles and Madmen use to talk to them-
selves in Publique, and he that publishes that which he would
have no Man understand but himself do's the same thing."

SAMUEL BUTLER

TOM THOMSON

It was a gray day
with a drizzle of rain,
something of fey
in the air
as though the lake,
the islands,
the sky
were watching,
waiting,
waiting for what?
A sense of doom
in the air
with silence everywhere
as though a god

Six

had spoken,
and then a loon laughed
and the spell was broken,
the spell was broken.

And Tom Thomson laughed
and his friends laughed
as he launched his canoe
from the dock
and paddled away
with his lures and his lines
to befool the old trout
they had lost so often
in the bay in the river
below Joe Lake Dam;
and he turned
with a wave of his hand
and was gone.

And a loon laughed
and the old trout
waited in the bay
and the sky and lake watched
but he never came
was never seen again
till his body floated
on the surface
eight days later.

What happened?
No one knows,
no one will ever know;
no one knows
except perhaps the old trout
below Joe Lake Dam
and the lake
and the islands

the loon and the sky
that watched and waited ;
no one knows.

And in far off Shoreham,
A. Y. Jackson, painting again,
after a "blighty" in France
heard of the upturned canoe
on the lake
and his dreams of camping
and fishing and painting
once more with his friend
came to an end,
as all dreams come
to an end,
as all dreams come
to an end.

Legend has it in Algonquin
Tom Thomson
watches and looks
from the headland
above the bay
on Canoe Lake,
his palette and brushes
and panels in hand
painting the symphony
of the seasons
of his beloved land
he never finished ;
the unfolding year,
the folding leaf,
the gathered sheaf,
the winter snow,
the bright bateaux,
painting, painting ;

and the great trout
waits in the river
below Joe Lake Dam
and the loon laughs
and sky and lake watch
and only his voice is still
on land and lake
but his spirit is awake
throughout the land he loved
kindling youth to slake
their thirst in beauty.
His spirit is awake,
a torch and a token,
as though a god had spoken;
his spirit is awake,
his spirit is awake.

Arthur S. Bourinot

ON THE DEATH OF DYLAN THOMAS

Could I find words
I'd revile you
Till your hair fell down
And the sparks leaped.

Could I level my tongue
I'd curse and blacken
Your withered souls
Till they curled and dropped
From the wearing place.

For a poet is dead!
And not one of you little donkeys
Has wings to fly
Or tears to cry with.

Curt Lang

EDITOR'S NOTE

We reprint herewith our review of Dylan Thomas' "Collected Poems" as a token of respect to a true poet.

Here is a volume of modern poetry that it is a pleasure to read. It is modern in the sense that the poet uses his idiom as Wordsworth said he should in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. "These, and the like are the sensations and objects which the poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men and the objects which interest them."

This is modern poetry, sometimes difficult, sometimes faulty, but often, "star gestured" to use the poet's own words; and always lyrical. He has indeed the singing quality of his Welsh forebears. There are unfortunately few truly lyrical poets these days; most prefer to write a sort of emasculated, mystifying philosophy, lacking rhyme or reason, and that might have better been written in prose.—Not so Dylan Thomas. His best poems are "worth their weight in leprechaun gold" as *THE SATURDAY REVIEW* said of them.

This volume is full of striking phrases, quotable lines, and magic imagery. No modern poet is more quotable, more memorable, more full of sound and fury signifying everything. There is something of Blake's fiery vision and fury in this work; something prophetic as the Bible is prophetic; as indeed all great work is and there is in it something of the past, something of the present and something of the future. In other words Dylan Thomas is a poet in the true sense, and no nonsense about it! He writes with his head in the clouds and his feet on the ground, his eyes on the sea and his fellow man. Here is a sample of how he modernizes the idea in that famous line of Milton's—"Comes the blind fury with the abhorred shears," which becomes—"Comes like a scissors stalking, tailor age." And note the graphic, terse description of Wales—"The October wind—with fists of turnips punishes the land,"—and the beauty of the following "By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds."

If more so called modern poets could write like this all would be well with poetry and one would have no cause for concern that poetry was fast becoming a lost art. We recommend Dylan Thomas to the "Abracadabra boys" to use an expression of that great American poet, Carl Sandburg. We also strongly recommend it to all poetry lovers, all the world over.

A. S. B.

FOR RAINER MARIA RILKE

One project of my life
Has been to find you, God.
To come upon you unawares
While working miracles,
Or quietly surveying streets
Where tragedy has walked,
Or riding hurricanes or lightning shafts,
Or simply laughing on an ocean swell.

This search has been to tell you
That all is incomplete
Unknowing how you look or talk
Or smile or lay your quite enormous
Hand on mortal shoulders.

And now that grief and overwhelming love
Have brought you here before my eyes,
Like chimney smoke the quest evaporates.
How could I ever dare to think
In all these years:
Your body is a mountain to the clouds;
Your face turns down and is my very own.

Lee Richard Hayman

ON 'LES FAUVES' EXHIBITED AT
THE TORONTO ART GALLERY, MAY 1953

Tread softly feet along the new-set tiles,
Between the beds of tulips —
Row on row of green-garbed girls,
Tilting pink and slightly tattered parasols
To hide young faces shy with smiles.
Ah, turn from Rodin's muscled male, my sisters,
Sad mute in bronze, with all his strength defenceless . . .
Perhaps he'll hear my whisper as I pass
"O Adam, please forgive us."

Lu Seymour

WINDLESTRAW

Wind over meadow
Sun under cover
Rain is a shadow
Where breezes hover.

This is the harvest,
End of the growing;
Gather the fairest
Seeds of your sowing.

Wind as you linger
Cool in the rushes
Busy each finger
Weaving dry sashes.

Ribbons gleam golden,
Patient with waiting—
Tangle them not; take
Care in your plaiting.

Make of this beauty
Sweet lengths of rope
Stronger than duty
Brighter with hope.

Dry grasses curing
Sunned and wind-blown;
Rope is maturing
For markets unknown.

Bernice Ames

HOME PORT

The harbour is the same, though the lights on the water are new,
And ships that I do not know come wobbling in.
The language of hawsers is familiar, the dry screech of tackle
not altogether strange.
Scrolls of miscellaneous floating sea-weed are their own silent
protest against change.

Once I was lost here. The harbour and the harbour voices were
intimate then.
Once I was cold. There was warmth in a longshoreman's
smouldering eyes.

It was calm once. There was souging of tide at the waterline
where the ship rode.

Dark. But the flick of a seagull's wing lightened the mood.

I tell myself nothing is lost;

Calm after storm, peace after war—such things are ever the
same.

Why then this sudden qualm, this feeling of purposeless
change?

The pier is the same battered pier. What is it that is strange?

I. Newell

HAY STACK

New York City stands like a gigantic hay stack
On the edge of meadowland America.
One needle does not know the other is being threaded.
Haven't you noticed how the people on Eighth street
Are strangers on Tenth avenue?
Folks can be dead three years before you find it out.
There can be four weddings on Broadway
Before you know it.
Only the bell ringers and door knockers get around,
Knife grinder and exterminator,
Vegetable peddler and gas man and high cash clothes,
Organ grinder and monkey.
These are the people who get around.
They know what's going in the next block and heart,
These are the messengers
From soul to soul,
Bell ringers and door knockers
Who can find the needle in the hay stack.

Helmer O. Oleson

INDESTRUCTIBLE

Time is the ultimate thief
Of beauty, power and glory.
The hour-glass holds in fief
The end of the triumph story.

Carthage, Sidon and Tyre
Have strutted their given day
To burn on the funeral pyre
Of history's accustomed way.

But Aprils never die.
From winter's mouldy tomb
A resurrection must defy
The clutch of final doom.

Margaret Lathrop Law

AT THE ART GALLERY
"TENEMENT ROW"

In the melancholy afternoon
The winter sun
Falls aslant the red-brick house
While windows gape and grin
At grey walls opposite.

Black shadow and pale yellow light
Obscures the coming dusk,—
Obscures the laughing harlequin
Who came with beauty in
To hide his lustfulness.

Edward Jameson

WITHOUT LIMIT

The near and far uplifted lore,
the deeply grown, are of the sky's
dimensions, of the brown-green door.

To His woodland wind, His saplings' rise
we write our words, but not by hand;
with the fallen leaf, we cast them high
in exultation as we stand
on His clean hill.

Leaf, bird in sky
race from the limb. Then we walk down
the slope, and kneel beside the creek.

The dropping leaf and feather flow
from sight, not mind.

We rise and seek
beyond small rivers and great seas
the vast, controlled and endless surge,
God's ageless truth called mysteries,
for our white word, our soul's purge.

Joseph Joel Keith

BRIDGES

A road gives designation to our dreams;
It leads, it goes, it winds and always seems
Most favoured, falling or rising; little bends
Keep beckoning, hair-pins thrill; it never ends.
An aqueduct may proudly arch to show
The beauty of two ways, above, below—
Ah, far below the gleaming river runs;
Or maybe some lost rivulet the tons
Of traffic never notice.

This I feel
Supremely: *roads that charm have bridges;*
Bestriding valleys, leaning on the ridges
Or mocking mountain shadows as they seek
A brooding marsh or some meandering creek
Where cattle gaze . . . The girded strength of steel,
The chiselled stone; or wave-wet planks of deal;
Remote, one roofed against the rain and snow,
Defy ubiquitous concrete . . . the flow
Of constant traffic tunes a bridge to hum
With the great Mind's eternal pendulum.

J. R. G. Adams

MY JOHNNY

Johnny is a trucker, rolling down the road,
Listening to his motor, swaying with his load,
Fuelling up on coffee and pie a la mode.

Johnny, my Johnny, watch out for the law.

Hell-for-leather Johnny, a half hour late,
Bashing over bridges never built to bear the weight,
Cracking up the concrete with his thirty tons of freight.

Johnny, my Johnny, watch out for the law.

Johnny's had his warning, "We're gonna get you, Mac."
Once they take his license he will never win it back,
So his eyes are on the mirror, for the law is on his track.

Johnny, my Johnny, watch out for the law.

Watch, Johnny, and I'll pray,
Drive, Johnny, don't stay.
Summer, winter, night, day,
Johnny, my Johnny, watch out for the law.

Raymond Hull

SEAPORT

She's a tough seaport town, boy,
And oh, how she can hum!
Cheques to cash and thirsts to quench,
Here the suckers come.

Tell me something sweet, dear,
Tell me something funny,
Tell me that you love me, dear,
Before I take your money.
Kiss me in a cab, dear,
Stake me to a gown,
Fit me with a ring, dear,
Before I roll you down.

Tell me all your grief, pal,
Tell me all you know;
Snivel on my shoulder, pal,
Before I snatch your dough.
Have a drink on me, pal,
Drink until you're full;
Fill her up again, pal,
Before I split your skull.

She's a tough seaport town, boy,
Never stops her humming.
More she bleeds the suckers dry,
Faster they keep coming.

Raymond Hull

THE LATE AFTERNOON

There is an end to the long day, as to desire,
As to all things, and to all things that fade,
Grow old and wither away, with you and me.
Where ends these days? I do not know.

I know that sometimes the sudden sunlight falls
Twinkling through the foliage of the woods
A moment, perhaps, until other shadows fall.
A moment, then, when shadows are divisible,
We walk within a garden.

That door we closed,
(The door we wished we had not closed)
Upon an old abstraction that knocked perpetually—
But our heart grown fugitive of the chase still cries,
Escape! Escape!

This memory disturbed from the settled dust,
Down the labyrinths of all pale dreams . . .
I call Echo but there is no reply
Long after I follow desire.

A shawl of moonlight lay over Eden and over
My love's shoulder . . . but under the dark foliage
My love's eyes contained a darker vision,
And whether virgin or promised sinner there,
I could not see.

Edward Jameson

LET IT SUFFICE

Once more the zinnias have renounced their colors,
garnet, vermilion, coral and cochineal;
and frosted stalks with their rosetted pallors
embitter the wind; portend the crystal scale
of izing-glass on dew-drenched walks and gutters,
the glaze on the pond, the sickle on the wind;
meadows of copper and bronze, the trees in tatters,
the blaze and burning over the desiccate land.
Yet to the scathed, this climate and incense
is homestead, hearth, penates, journey's end;
the solid pith in the pulp of circumstance,

blue chimney-smoke to the homesick vagabond.
There is no saying why these ruins concur
with a minor mood of abandonment and loss,
with penance, ashes, the instinct to chamfer
sharp angles, harshness, brilliant sun, the rose.
Let it suffice—this merciless consuming,
reducing oriflamme and lustre to earth
has correspondence with an inner timing,
is corollary to a psychic dearth.

Christine Turner Curtis

FIDDLER, SCRAPE YOUR BOW

Old fiddler, scrape your bow on sagebrush veins
And jig a rye-tune through my rimrock mind;
While I go galloping over alkaline plains—
Lost in the gloaming with the moon cloud-blind,
Throwing my long pale shadow on before,
As now in memory it plods behind—
A pitiful creature that the trails abhor,
Bent by the whimsey of the rain and wind.
Old fiddler, scrape your bow on cedar bough;
Grunt Piute chant until my desert throat
Catches the chance refrain of then and now;
Though coyotes unloose their hunger-note
And restless shadows lose their unblazed way,
And darkness closes with the break of day.

Cullen Jones

ITALIAN CHILDREN AT EASTER

It is a beautiful thing to see
The children running in the rain in their Easter finery,
The dark Italian children with the swinging hips already
And the little chests, the yet unready
Flower of maturity

Laid cool as sanctity
On their broad brows.
Dressed in high lavender, with eyes like smoke,
They run for shelter
Holding their hats, gay flowery Easter bonnets
Come all askew!

The children's cries make music in the rain!
The thin brown legs cut figures in the rain!

Laughingly they giggle out of doorways
. . . Warm and happy eager children
To see about the weather
(Will this rain just about last forever?).

And you see the too-long coat they will grow into,
The waistline hanging to the little hips
The neckline gaping and falling
And out of it rising
Pure as a heart
The long thin face of the Italian primitives.

Florence Ungar

TO ANNAMARIE

If you should find
the wings not gold,
but gilt that chips
and cracks with the
wear of everyday,

if under the gilt
there's grey
or brown or dun,
and drabness
unrelated to the sun,

how then shall you
with buttercup braids
and eyes as blue
as alpine gentians,
child of the heights and sun,
live, in a world
of brown or grey or dun.

H. Patricia Collacott

SACRED TRANCE

My beloved said :

—God,

take the hundred rainy autumns and give me the vanished
rainbow,

take all the prayers of the pious crone and give me the sin of
the sacred trance.

My beloved said :

—An open window is attractive to danger.

An open window lures with wonder, with tempting height.

My beloved did not fall as an eagle, shot in dauntless summits,
who drops the world from stiff wings to death and splendor.

I saw her kindling a ragged sky.

I saw her mournful hair like a twisted shroud.

I saw her blood decorate the rubbish of Pike Street.

Autumn grips the penury of the crooked street.

The cold boughs of the bare park embrace me as with the dead
arms of my beloved.

Her eyes gloam in the frail light.

I see her falling from each window,

and hear her body shattering like the voice of Mephistopheles.

Menke Katz

CONVERSATION: UNFINISHED

Between us
Syllables
Are said by dragon-fly
And swallow's flight—
At this pool's edge.

(O trenchant, penny-bright,
And voluble,
The silver phrase
Of minnows' ways!)

And noon's a-shimmer . . .
The conversation done . . .
But not concluded.
Penultimate . . .

The midge sleeps
In the sun.

Doreen Gordon Davis

OF IVORY TOWERS

I shall remain in these meadows:
I will not again be lonely.

Once this would not satisfy:
I must scale those walls,
Clamber upon that parapet.

But the difficult stairs to an ivory tower
Shall never again tempt me.

I shall not again aspire
To those windows which eye me narrowly.

Witness these bruised fists!
Hard, sweet, their discovery:
The poet is stone—
Cold, isolate.

But he is gazing upon these flowers,
And that is where his heart is . . .

Doreen Gordon Davis

MISS ABIGAIL

Miss Abigail stands at the candy display
Serving the public day after day.

Old Miss Abigail also sells
Bride-cakes and ice-cream slippers and bells.

For three generations she's planned, back stage,
Peach-pretty parties for every age.

Though frail and bent she dares not stop.
Miss Abigail works at the corner shop.

There wistfully, with genial art
Miss Abigail feeds her hungry heart.

Nell K. A. Foster

THE BLESSING

Baby Jesu! , ,
From your star-lit stable,
Straw-strewn stall,
Bless the bounty
On each table
In this hall.

Young Man Jesu!
Choose your company;
Shut the door;
Shake some shavings
From your tunic
On this floor

—Amen.

Johnstone G. Patrick

POETASTERY

O take your roses and your nightingales,
your Attica, Ionian seas and Thrace,
add starlight, moonlight, and your breaking heart,
your lover's faithless lips and sun-bright face,
the garden where your dewy lilies sleep,
the leafy bower you sit and grieve within;
mix all ingredients well . . . then go and find
a river deep and wide and throw them in!

Next, take your livid moon and mottled sun,
and all the nebulae of outer space,
your demon-lover's sultry temperament
his lean brown hands and dark neurotic face;
then add to these your tense atomic heart,
mix, mold into a cosmic lump,
and hop a rocket (interplanetry)
at "point of no return" get out and jump.

H. P. Collacott.

LOST HAVEN

There is a place — I know it, I have been there,
Where the long shadows lace the walks at evening
Before the sunset, after the still rain,
Where the tall windows wait for me to enter
Where thick white flowers in glimmering bowls are massed
In a dim gracious room that I have passed
Hearing known voices speaking of me gently,
Half heard, half dreamed of, murmuring together
Was it in April or September weather?
I have forgotten — was it far to come there?
When was I there? When may I go again?

Margaret Widdemer

ENCAMPMENT

I remember the encampment. My mind holds closely each
memory-tucked moment ;
Our teams of oxen, front legs hobbled, cuffed by thick leather
and linked chain,
Tinkling iron-clappered bell on milk cow's sleek, smooth neck,
Tiny circle of small glaciated stones that mother gathered with
gently determined hands,
Whose fingers toil-cracked tips, tore and twisted the pearl grey
prairie grass of year before,
Gingerly lifted cow chips from burlap bag, nested the fuel in the
strong ring for the fire miracle to cook our evening meal.

I remember the furry sleep-folded crocus, high whine of
thirsting insect and smoking smudge pot,
While lightly laughing I slipped my soft, young hand in dad's
work-hardened one and skipped beside him ;
Reached the cool, deep spring where carefully he eased a slab
from overhanging bank.
"Soft coal," he said, "pressed by the centuries in this dark form.
When we reach the "claim" we'll cut "popple" poles and dig
lignite to burn."
He walked away, then step retraced, slipped home the black,
unbroken clump ;
Eyes upraised, then with lowered head, "We'll leave this the
way He made it," dad said.

Mary Carr Wright

NIGHT SHADOWS

In the dead of night
the hours drop lifeless ;
sounds turn ghoulis—
the screech of speeding taxi,
muffled laughter in the distance

The irregularity of roofs
over the dimlit blocks of houses
assume the pattern of black tombs
in a lonely cemetery.

In the dead of night
to walk alone . . . Strange
how you feel the wind
scrape the soles of your feet
on the viaduct!

Nothing in the dead of night
except to walk, walk . . .
with incoherent thoughts
shadowing the only guidepost:
the high dome of a courthouse,
tranquil and austere
against the bright Polaris
and seven stars of the big dipper!

William Conklin

TIME

Time is poured
Through the keyhole of night
In dribbling, useless grams;
Good grain
That could be used
Is slept stealthily away.

Time is poured
Through the vat of day
In monstrous, rushing seas!
Good grain
That could be used
Is swept carelessly away.

Betee Duncan

DAYS OF HATE

And the long, thin days
Snaked along
In maddening weariness
And doubt-load upon doubt
Made them longer,
And thinner,
And harder ;
And bitterness became
Their poison.
They were dreaded
But fascination for them lingered.
Fascination grew into hate
And hate into emptiness.

Betee Duncan

HOLY INTERVAL

For those gray hours of the future
Seal deep in your memory the fruit of gladness
From bells and carols,
While scarlet-ribboned wreaths and lighted trees
Rainbow the land
And the air is alive with greetings.

The sorrows of all the world are hushed
And benediction floats down
On the silver gleam of a star,
When hearts beat high with goodwill
And people pause for smile and handclasp
During the holy interval of Christmas.

Amy Bissett England

EDELWEISS

Take the edelweiss now and the lonely altitude,
Or the fern
Prolific, indifferent, below where ice won't intrude
And the wind's not stern.

You can't have both. It's true that the peaks are lonely.
The chalets are far below.
The alphorn note spirals but speaks in whispers only
And the goatherds pleasantries blow

Into dispersing airs. You can't have everything;
The moon and the fire.
But I tell you there's a glory in the bitter sting
As you push higher.

And the rarefied air of this alp compensates nearly
For hand frozen to page with cramp,
And loneliness. You'll find you haven't paid dearly
For your glacial camp.

Especially when, on an arctic afternoon
Your fingers grope
Among the numbing strata, and you pick the edelweiss
From a southern slope.

M. E. Drew

PONDS

I never pass a wayside pond
But always I can spy
A more translucent world beyond
With so much purer sky.

And with the wonder there unfurled,
With vivid air and tree,
I muse if we might have our world
Washed with such clarity.

Then, like that clear, inverted land,
Where luminous glows the view,
All would be rinsed with crystal, and
Heaven would be nearer, too.

Louis Ginsberg

AFTER GRIEF

I do rejoice
That life goes on :
That people laugh,
Engage in song.

It would be grim
If all joy died
When hearts bereft
Are crucified.

Then with each rising
Sun, I pray
That God will strengthen
Me today.

Clara Bernhard†

STRAVINSKY CONDUCTS

On the lily pad podium he stands
Arms frog-angled
Agile legs poised to leap for a tone.
Adroitly he pulls cellos over whole notes,
Cajoles violins, teetering on a framework of dance,
Back up a slippery arpeggio.

From the depths of the musical pond
Melody grows, unfolding petal by petal
Blooms of perfection
Maturing in the wind of his baton.
Ripples of silence
Backdrop the beauty.

Swaying with the stream of sound
He softens formal tones
To flow in euphony.
Ethereal strangeness slips through mellow air:
Each flair of fervor falls in silver symphony.

Bernice Ames

SUKYAMA

The rain,
The red roofs
Water coloured against the sea,
The rickety old tea house
And the odd smell of tea
. . . And you
Standing there
Outside the throng
Long, long ago
In old Hong Kong.
Smoky eyes across from me
Tell old dreams as we sip tea.
How long have you been waiting there
Sitting on that yellow chair?
The old pagoda sang a song
Long, long ago
In old Hong Kong.

Mary Jane Lee

PORTRAIT

You are autumn, deep smoke and mystery.
The pines, the dead leaves
And a warmth within old smoky walls
You are winter skies and seas,
Night snow in low hills

And the north wind in the trees.
You are the green and blue of spring.
The open coat, the laughing song
And the cool deepness of evening.
You are summer's great prismatic sun
Searching a sea of turquoise blue
And all the world was meant for you.

Mary Jane Lee

NEGRO BOY WEEPING

His sin is grave, or so it seems at first.
The heavens are angry: tears begin to fall.
Yet when his childhood gods have been placated
his fault is clearly little after all.

And as the clouds dissolve into forgiveness,
the guileless sun comes dancing through his tears,
the sullen storm of childish anger passes,
lost in a grin that waggles both his ears.

Nigeria.

Raymond Tong

DANCE, AFRICA

Dance, Africa, dance, for the night is coming,
the night of terror where the whole world's sorrow
descends upon the darkness of your drumming,
masking with ancient pain your bright tomorrow.

Dance, Africa, dance, for the night is here,
throwing its cloak of death around your dreams,
confounding truth in mystery and fear,
till nothing can remain what first it seems.

Dance, Africa, dance, for the night is yours,
the night where demons leer and hopes retreat,
where gods of darkness join you round your fires
and blind delirium grips your stamping feet.

Dance, Africa, dance, beat loud each frenzied drum,
despite your age-old trance the dawn will come.

Raymond Tong

NEGRO GIRL LAUGHING

O laughing, dark-skinned daughter of the sun,
with breasts that mock the lemons in your hand,
flaunting the rounded beauty of their youth,
you are as wild, untutored as your land.

Yet as you laugh into the future's face,
you have more riches than all wisdom brings—
your proudly-tilted head and crystal eyes,
your body's glistening bronze, your blood that sings.

Nigeria

Raymond Tong

CHRISTMAS

1953

See now we go
candle in hand
softly,
place it on the window
brightly,
let its light glow
on the Christmas snow.

"Peace", dare we say
atom bomb taken?
Leashed power we display

heedless some day
humanity we slay.
"Christ let your holy light
guide through the darkening night."

Now let us go
candle in hand softly,
holding in our heart lightly
Love's warming glow
to melt Hate's numbing snow.

Mariel Jenkins

AUTUMN PREFERENCE

I have avoided evergreens in the autumn,
And sought the hot sumac, the red maple,
As being emotional and thus like humans,
Breaking out gold banners for wind to staple
Against the ground in what could be defeat
If they acknowledged such; not fearlessness,
But fear itself — straining against the wind's embrace,
And thinking desperately of their lost loveliness.
I have walked in those forests like a friend
Of trees, and having a richness added to
My soul's substance. And this was in the morning
Before the full sun, and during the dew.
And presently the red leaves were brushing my side,
Falling and falling until the red stain
Flooded the world. But I remembered apple blossoms,
Acorns and chestnuts. I remembered the rain.

Alfred W. Purdy

ANACHRONISM

If I had gone to Samarcand when I was young,
Then I would not dream so.
I think I would sleep peacefully, my tongue
Would never know
The taste of introspection ; and the walls of Troy
Would rubble be and rubble are.
The substance, not the meaning of the form,
The light and not the star.
But I would boast such boasts as drunken soldiers made
In conquered cities very long ago ;
Seek out such rarities of innocence
As bloom and blow
Through many columned time. At Ilium,
Before the walls went down, I'd scoff
At terror in a slave girl's eyes — the drums are still,
And Hector takes his armor off.

Alfred W. Purdy

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